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3 **GREENVILLE TRANSIT AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL MEETING**  
4 301 University Ridge County Square – Suite 400  
5 Greenville, SC 29601

6 **MINUTES**  
7 **January 20, 2023**

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9 **Members Present:** Ms. Addy Matney (Vice Chair), Mr. David Mitchell, Mr. Sean Rusnak, Ms. Walker Smith (Chair),  
10 Ms. Amanda Warren (Treasurer)  
11 **Absent Board Members:** Ms. Santora Bowling, Mr. Stephen Astemborski  
12 **Greenlink Staff:** Kayleigh Cleek (Transit Planning Mgr.), Terry Dedmon (Transit Operations Mgr.), James Keel  
13 (Director), Nicole McAden (Marketing and Public Affairs Mgr.), Liston Mehserle (Transit Planner)  
14 **Other City Staff:** Kristina Junker (Budget Administrator)

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16 **Ms. Walker Smith, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at approximately 12:30 p.m.**

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18 **Quorum established by roll call.**

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20 **Ms. Addy Matney made a motion to approve the December 15, 2022 GTA Board Meeting Minutes. Mr. Sean Rusnak**  
21 **seconded the motion. There is no opposition. The motion carries.**

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23 **No Public Comments related to items on the agenda.**

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25 **Mr. David Mitchell made a motion to approve slate of officers as presented: Ms. Walker Smith (Chair),**  
26 **Ms. Addy Matney (Vice Chair) and Ms. Amanda Warren (Treasurer). Mr. Sean Rusnak seconded the motion. There is**  
27 **no opposition. The motion carries.**

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29 **Greenlink Annual Report (Presented by Director, James Keel and Greenlink staff).**

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31 **Accomplishments in 2022 (James Keel, Director):**

- 32 • Ridership for Fixed Route and Trolley increased 17% over the previous fiscal year. Paratransit (for persons with  
33 disabilities) ridership increased 54% over the previous fiscal year.
- 34 • Discounted fare added for veterans.
- 35 • Trolley service modified for access to Unity Park & West Greenville. The route provided an average of 633 rides per  
36 month June - September 2022.
- 37 • Two staff members became certified CDL testers with the SCDMV, which will decrease testing time for CDLs. 80% of the Bus  
38 Operator in Training program participants pass their CDL test on their first attempt.
- 39 • Site plan for new facility is a 26-acre piece of property with an 8-to-10-acre park buffering community. There will be  
40 60,000 square feet of covered space and will be able to accommodate approximately 80 buses with room for expansion.  
41 Outdoor amenities include a green space with a trail, memorial to Washington High School, a pavilion and playground.  
42 Board room will be made available to the community. An active railway is on back of property, so a retaining wall had to  
43 be put in to stabilize and secure the area. Stormwater ponds have gone in and are working. Buses will pull out around  
44 5:15 a.m. and return around 11:30 p.m. The only exception for traffic during the day is for Proterra buses, which need to  
45 be charged more frequently.
- 46 • Was awarded the 2022 Best Marketing & Communications Educational Initiative by APTA for Greenlink and Greenville  
47 Connects' "Transit is Essential" campaign.
- 48 • Won SCDOT 2022 Transit Provider of the Year.
- 49 • Kayleigh Cleek received Mass Transit's 40 under 40 Award making her the third staff member to be recognized.
- 50 • Rudy Jackson recognized by staff for retiring after a 45-year career as a bus driver.

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52 **Community Engagement (Nicole McAden, Marketing and Public Affairs Manager):**

- 53 • Citizens Transit Academy (CTA) is facilitated every January. Program educates Greenville County residents on intricacies  
54 of transit. Graduates include community activists, government representatives, elected officials and various groups in the  
55 community. CTA is also offered as an OLLI class at Furman University. The 2023 class just kicked off with 20 participants.  
56 Participants committed to improving transit.

- 57 • Twelve Fare Free Days occurred in 2022 in addition to a holiday bus which rotated on different routes. One event  
58 provided awareness of human trafficking and one event provided gifts to Greenlink riders on Valentine’s Day. Fare free  
59 sponsorships provided by Greenville Connects, Piedmont Health Foundation, Proterra and United Way. Ridership  
60 increased on average 16% during fare free days compared to the week prior to the event. Partnered with United  
61 Ministries the past three years where riders donate canned goods and ride for free. Partnered with the iMAGINE Upstate  
62 Festival on the 2022 Bike vs. Bus vs. Car Race to show how Greenville residents could get to iMAGINE Upstate Festival.  
63 Bike rider, Bus rider and Car rider competed to get to the festival. The contest was reviewed by a panel of judges, and  
64 various criteria had to be met. The bus rider came in first place. Proterra sponsored a Fare Free Day to promote bus  
65 ridership to the festival.
- 66 • Larry Dennis was 2022 Earth Day Superhero. He rode the bus 1,400 times in 2021.
- 67 • Bus Shelter Art Contest held for the second year. Art contest had 47 submission and 6 new murals were installed. Contest  
68 introduces transit to high school students in Greenville County. There are 15 total murals throughout the bus network.
- 69 • GTA Board members did ride-a-longs with County Council and held three presentations throughout 2022.
- 70 • Public input sought when service or fare changes proposed such as adding Unity Park to trolley route, providing reduced  
71 fares for veterans and implementing the Contingency Plan due to CDL driver shortage. This process takes a minimum of 3  
72 months for outreach and evaluation to take place.
- 73 • No Car November is an event where community leaders are asked to give up their car for one week. Partnered with the  
74 HDR Greenville office to showcase downtown employees taking the pledge. There were 23 participants who signed the  
75 pledge which off-set 4,480 miles.
- 76 • The Tiny Bus Concert series launched in 2022 through partnership with Greenville Connects. Held concerts with County  
77 Councilman, Benton Blount, and Delvin Choice who competed on “The Voice”. Artists perform five songs. Objective is to  
78 attract audience members who are new to Greenlink and haven’t used public transit before.
- 79 • Adopt-A-Stop is a volunteer program for individuals to help keep stops clean and safe. Nineteen stops are currently  
80 adopted by 12 volunteers.

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82 **Bus Stop Infrastructure (Kayleigh Cleek, Transit Planning Manager):**

- 83 • Successes include installing 6 new message boards in the terminal and 6 new bus stops at the request of customers.  
84 Upgraded 36 bus stops. Awarded RAISE funding at 100% for almost \$6 million for an additional 300 bus stop upgrades.
- 85 • Completed 49 upgrades in 2022. Plan for 57 upgrades in 2023.

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87 **System Wide Key Performance Indicators (Liston Mehserle, Transit Planner):**

- 88 • Transit agencies nationwide exhibited low but steady ridership in 2022.
- 89 • Greenlink ridership (buses only) showed strong growth. Started with ridership of 41,000 in January 2022 and 55,000 in  
90 December 2022. Comparing ridership in 2019 (pre-pandemic), Greenlink ridership surpassed numbers for 2019 with  
91 increase of 10%. Greenlink 2022 downtown trolley ridership still trending upward. During “Fall for Greenville” moved  
92 over 7,000 people. However, 2022 trolley ridership lower than pre-pandemic 2019 numbers.
- 93 • GAP ridership in 2022 surpassed 1,000 rides each month. 2019 (pre-pandemic) averaged 800 rides per month.

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95 **Financial Outlook (Kristina Junker, Budget Administrator):** Total operating revenue of \$730,000 received from passenger  
96 fares, parking lot revenue and advertising. Overall operating expenses up 8.3%. Total operating revenue which includes  
97 partnership contributions through City of Greenville, Greenville County, Federal and State operating grants up around 6.9%.  
98 Capital grants and contributions down 7.5%. Greenville County land donation in FY21. Overall increase in net position is  
99 projected to be around \$2 million. Salaries and wage up 8% due to annual wage adjustments and overtime. Fuel increased  
100 by around 100%. For partner contributions, City of Greenville operating and capital contributions around along with  
101 contributed services around \$1.6 million. City also made contributions for trolley for around \$226,000. The County’s  
102 contribution for both operating and capital was around \$2.5 million. Other operating partners Bon Secours, Clemson  
103 University and CU-ICAR contributed \$136,000.

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105 **Operations (Terry Dedmon, Transit Operations Manager):** On-time performance for fixed route was 67.1% in 2021. In  
106 2022 on-time performance improved to 74.4% which is an increase in on time performance of 17.3%. Decrease in early and  
107 late arrivals due to adjustments made to time points relative to times of heavy congestion and stricter enforcement of  
108 departures from bus terminal. “Slow Your Roll” campaign also implemented. Have 11 Bus Operator openings. Have four in  
109 hiring process. 7 positions left to fill before Saturday service hours can be extended. Sign-on bonus was offered for persons  
110 who have a CDL. Offering \$500 Referral bonus to employees if referrals make it through the hiring process. Pay increase in  
111 starting salary for Bus Operators from \$17.50 to \$19.60 per hour.

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**2023 Goals (James Keel, Director):**

- In 2017 Hollingsworth Funds provided local match for an ITS system. The five-year contract ended. Award given to vendor for a newer and more robust system to get better data, make boardings easier and the Transit app will make it easier for riders to track the real-time location of buses. Paratransit riders will have ability to schedule rides using the Via app.
- Maintenance facility is about 77% funded. Once items are removed that are not needed to move in, around \$9 million will be needed to complete the project. Working with partners to see how to address shortage.
- Saturday Extended Hours – Need drivers to extend Saturday service.
- Customer Rewards Program will begin later this year.
- Customer Listening Sessions are upcoming. Customers can provide feedback to help staff identify future improvements.

**Question & Answer:**

**Q:** Butch Kiren, City Council, asked number of electric buses in Greenlink fleet and goals for increasing them in the future?

**A:** Mr. Keel stated there are 4 Proterra buses in fleet which is 20% of our large bus fleet. Fleet size must double to achieve 30-minute frequencies. In December GTA entered into agreement to purchase 5 more Proterra buses scheduled to arrive in 2024. There are 13 diesel buses eligible for replacement this year which means they have been fully depreciated, but are not in a state of disrepair. Greenlink will be working on local match to replace buses with some type of alternative fuel vehicles. The reason the agency is looking at alternative fuel vehicles, not necessarily electric, is due to the fact that as an agency we must be able to respond to disaster response requests for evacuations in other parts of the state. Bad weather is not good for electric buses. The Board adopted a resolution to move away from diesel and move to zero emission vehicles such as electric and CNG vehicles in 2025.

**Q:** Dorothy Dowe, City Council, questioned whether the school district guarantees a 40-hour work week for its bus drivers?

**A:** Mr. Keel stated he thinks they come close to forty hours. The school district has split shift where they drive in the mornings and then return to complete their shift in the afternoon – which is appealing to some drivers. Scheduling has been number one reason given for persons who quit. Greenlink is now offering a shift differential, providing an extra \$1 per hour on top of their base pay, for persons working past 6 p.m. and on the weekends.

**Q:** City Councilmember Dowe asked whether compressed natural gas can it be offered in the future at new facility?

**A:** Mr. Keel stated that the electrical infrastructure and natural gas infrastructure is being installed in new facility.

**Mr. Sean Rusnak made a motion to authorize the Board Chair to execute an easement agreement in favor of Duke Energy Carolinas for the purpose of providing electrical and communication facilities on property located at 205 Arcadia Drive through resolution # 2023-01. Mr. David Mitchell seconded the motion. There is no opposition. The motion carries.**

**GTA/Staff Member Reports:**

Mr. David Mitchell stated that allegations have been made by individuals and by the media in reference to a letter received and in court filings. Some of the allegations specifically accuse Greenlink Director James Keel of wrongdoing. GTA board members take the allegations very seriously. GTA board members have not been provided any evidence as to any of these accusations that have been made, but the board feels it appropriate that the board investigate these allegations and what has been said.

**Mr. David Mitchell made a motion to add an agenda item to the February meeting to discuss investigations into the allegations against Mr. Keel and consider any motions based on the board members' findings. Ms. Addy Matney seconded the motion. There is no opposition. The motion carries.**

Ms. Addy Matney stated that many allegations also include inaccuracies about the project. She encourages everyone present to review what is currently listed on the project website ([RideGreenlink.com/BusGarage](http://RideGreenlink.com/BusGarage)) because there is a ton of information on how this process has unfolded.

**Ms. Addy Matney made a motion that the GTA develop a press release in response to recent media coverage and that an update be given at the February Board meeting. Mr. David Mitchell seconded the motion. There is no opposition. The motion carries.**

**No Public Comments related to items not on the agenda.**

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Mr. David Mitchell made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Addy Matney seconded the motion. There is no opposition. The motion carries. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:55 p.m.

Prepared by: Lorrie Brown Date: 2/23/23  
Lorrie Brown, Board Secretary  
Approved by: Walker Smith Date: 2/23/23  
Walker Smith, Chair

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